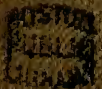

No. 4428.74

THE TRUSTEES OF THE
PUBLIC LIBRARY
OMNIVM
LVX
CIVIVM
OF THE CITY OF
BOSTON
1852 - 1878

1923
JC JUN 24
MAR 20 1941

THE

CHIVALRY OF THE SOUTH.

BY

EMILY SHIRREFF.

2 2 7 2

TRACT No. 6.

3303

LONDON:
Published for the Ladies' London Emancipation Society,
BY
EMILY FAITHFULL,
Printer and Publisher in Ordinary to Her Majesty,
VICTORIA PRESS, 14, PRINCES STREET, HANOVER SQUARE, W.

1864.

January.] *Price* 1*d.* ; 5*s. per* 100.

62812

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

MISS BIGGS.
MISS BRIGHT.
MISS COBBE.
MISS COURTAULD.
MRS. COOKE.
MISS DAVIES.
MISS ESTLIN.
MRS. GRAHAM.
MRS. HARRISON.
MISS HARRISON.
MISS A. HARRISON.
MRS. LUCAS.
MISS MATHEWS.
MRS. H. MARTINEAU.
MRS. MANNING.
MRS. W. MALLESON.
MISS M'KEE.
MRS. T. B. POTTER.
MISS PRIESTMAN.
MISS REMOND.
MRS. ROBINS.
MRS. SLATTER.
MRS. STANSFELD.
MRS. TAYLOR.
MRS. H. TAYLOR.
MRS. WEDGEWOOD.
MISS WILSON.

TREASURER.

MISS A. MANNING.

AUDITOR.

MRS. F. MALLESON.

EDITING COMMITTEE.

MRS. MANNING.
MRS. W. MALLESON.
MRS. P. A. TAYLOR.

BANKERS.

LONDON AND WESTMINSTER BANK.

HONORARY SECRETARY.

MRS. P. A. TAYLOR.

THE CHIVALRY OF THE SOUTH.

THERE have perhaps been few things more remarkable in the history of public opinion than the pro-slavery sympathy which has gained ground in England during the last two years and a half. Aversion to slavery had, as we thought, become a national feeling; any reasoning on the subject would have appeared superfluous if not absurd; when suddenly the question is once more brought prominently forward under the excitement of the civil war in America, and we find that the national feeling, which seemed so deeply rooted, melts before the poorest sophisms that dishonest rhetoricians ever strung together. What have been the ruling motives of those writers, who, in daily, weekly, and monthly periodicals, have—so far as this subject is concerned—disgraced the press of a free country, it were useless to inquire; what has given them power to work the mischief is more important; and that must be traced to the unreasoning habits of the multitude, even of the so-called educated multitude. For it is a mistake to suppose that the sheep-like propensity to follow the leader

is less developed in them than in the lower mob; they simply require that the leader should put on a different air and use better rounded periods than would satisfy "the great unwashed." This is a fruitful and a sad subject for meditation for all who care for real national progress, but general reflections are out of place here; it is with one manifestation only of such a state of mind that I am concerned in these pages. Ten years ago Mrs. Beecher Stowe's writings had carried popular feeling away, as with a strong tide, in the opposite direction. Now if "Uncle Tom" is mentioned, it is with a smile, or in a whisper; the "Key" which contained the evidence on which an opinion, not a mere feeling, might have been here formed, was neglected then, and is forgotten now. Nothing has changed which those two books, the one with artistic power, the other in sad earnest, laid open to us. Such as slavery was then, when the women of England gathered in aristocratic halls to address pathetic appeals to America, such or worse is it now, when aristocratic dinner-parties are entertained with praise of those very men who were held up to execration before. Approbation of slavery is not yet indeed confessed in open terms, the leaders of the movement are too dextrous to bring unpleasant sounding words bluntly forwards, till the way is carefully prepared for them. The state of feeling which they have hitherto successfully

cultivated is one of hatred and contempt for the Federals, and proportionate admiration and sympathy for the Confederates. That upon the success of the Confederates hangs the triumph of slavery, the misery of millions to be bequeathed to generations yet unborn, is too insignificant a question to be taken into account in forming their estimate of the two parties.

It is worth while to consider what is the groundwork on which a state of feeling, so alien to right and justice, can have been cultivated. The following is the only intelligible explanation that suggests itself. Social and political prejudices unite in this country to create a distrust and dislike of a country like America. This feeling of long growth has been stimulated from time to time by various offences to our national pride. Before the present war broke out, persons ignorant of America, and the vehemence of whose dislike was in proportion to their ignorance, made no distinction between North and South, and the name of Yankee, as a term of reproach or ridicule, was indiscriminately applied to all Americans; it therefore bore the burden of all offences against us. Now that the name is for the first time properly restricted, it has been easy to fasten upon those who rightfully bear it the whole load of dislike and distrust which had accumulated against it when it stood as an appellation for the

entire nation. Next, when the Northern people had thus, under the name of Yankees, been placed under the ban, it was easier still to make every act of rebellion against them wear an aspect of patriotism and grandeur. The utter ignorance that could lead men to suppose that the secession of the Southern States was a movement to assert national freedom from an oppressive yoke, has been exposed too often to need considering here; my object is to show a few of the other points in which admiration of the South, in contrast with the North, is equally unfounded. The prejudice against America is partly social, partly political. Various causes have contributed to create that political prejudice, prominent among which are dislike to democratic institutions, belief in the inordinate and unscrupulous ambition of the great republic, and a conviction of its hostility to England. Do these reasons then, such as they are, point more to the North than to the South? With regard to democratic institutions, they prevail more or less throughout the whole country, individual States differ from each other on some points in the North as well as in the South, but such as it was under the Union so is it now; the seceding States have altered nothing in that respect. With regard to democratic politics, they have always been strongest in the South. Socially aristocratic in the worst sense of the term—in that

sense which means the oppression of the many for the benefit of the few—the slaveholders have politically lent their whole influence to the democratic party. The ultra-democrats, even in the North, have been accordingly the Southern or pro-slavery party, who until very lately were opposed to the war, and to all measures of emancipation; yet England, nominally hating slavery and really mistrusting democrats, has been led to sympathise with that party.

Again, the charge of unprincipled ambition is certainly one which may more fairly be brought against the South than against the North. I do not mean that either section is indifferent to territorial aggrandisement—nor have old-established monarchies in Europe been quite free from the same reproach—but every buccaneering expedition which has affixed a stigma of disgrace to American ambition has been in furtherance of Southern views. Slave labour requires new fields to make its unthrifty ways yield any profit, and accordingly the annexation of Texas, the war with Mexico, the designs on Cuba, were to extend the dominion of the slaveholders. Every such expedition was for the furtherance of slavery; and now England is brought to sympathise with the men who planned and profited by them! Lastly, American hostility to England is a fact rather assumed than proved. Three years ago the Prince of Wales'

visit furnished very strong evidence of a feeling of the utmost cordiality all over the Northern States. The only place where he was ill-received was at Richmond, and the men of Richmond have now the warm sympathies of England. During the last thirty years the large majority of men in office have been Southerners. They had a subtle and dangerous game to play, and they could play it only by having the direction of the Central Government and revenue of the country ; accordingly no effort was left untried to keep the power in their own hands. That they should have been allowed to do so was an error of the Northern men which they are bitterly expiating now ; but it behoves us at least to remember that in consequence of this state of things, whatever pretensions, or insolence, or ambition, offended foreign nations during that period, were manifestations of Southern rather than of Northern feeling. The South had the profit, and the blame is taken from their shoulders to be laid on their adversaries ! They could only perpetuate a system of domestic tyranny by the aid of public encroachment and bullying ; yet the sympathies of England are with them ! Purely Northern feeling first showed itself offensively towards this country on occasion of the seizure of the Trent ; and, perhaps, before we betrayed such angry amazement at the popular bluster of the Yankees, at a moment of frantic

national excitement, it would have been well to have made sure that we are ourselves altogether free from petulent arrogance towards foreigners—to have been quite certain that we at least should preserve in times of excitement and national peril the calm dignity and even-handed justice with which we, of course, invariably behave in times of peace and security.

It remains to consider the social prejudice which has been seized upon by the dextrous advocates of the slaveholders, and has enabled them to enlist the sympathies of a large mass of Englishmen on the side of slavery. Here I must premise that I feel it disgraceful to be forced to meet such a prejudice gravely in speaking of great national questions. Had an enemy predicted it of our country we would have indignantly rebutted the charge; but it is too true. Englishmen have not been ashamed, when driven to give a reason for their dislike of the Federals, to say, "They are not gentlemen." They have not been afraid to own that their sympathies on questions of human rights, of freedom or slavery, of morality or foul licentiousness, were decided by such small conventionalities of manner and language as might fitly decide whether a person should be invited to a fashionable assembly! Truly this is the lowest frivolity that ever was thrust into argument under the name of opinion. It neither deserves

nor probably expects an answer, but it is curious to examine what are the higher gentleman-like qualities of the Southerners which procure for them the more favourable judgment of these dancing-master politicians. Considering how few of those who speak on the subject are personally acquainted with America it must be on some broad grounds that the dislike is founded, not on any comparison of particular points of the more or less pure accent, for instance, of New England or Virginia. And the only intelligible grounds alleged are that the Yankees are traders! A singular accusation, seeing that we have ourselves been called "a nation of shopkeepers." The Southerners, on the other hand, are landed proprietors, and in their luxurious mansions they lead a refined life of ease and leisure that reminds us of country-house life in England. Not denying the value of this as a political argument, it would be well for some who hold it to read a few chapters of Olmsted's "Explorations in the Cotton Kingdom," to see what lies beyond these few patrician mansions and show-plantations which delude so many unwary travellers. But, leaving this aside, which we have not space to examine, we will return to that one capital accusation—the Yankees are traders. And what, then, are the Southerners? The Yankee, among other vulgar occupations, grows corn; the Southern gentleman grows cotton; and each is eager for a

market for his produce. The Yankee is keen for profit; but what greed of gain ever went beyond that which to ensure new cotton fields has plunged a great country into war and manured its plains with blood? The Yankee is a trader and deals in all vulgar wares; the Southern gentleman has choicer merchandise—he deals in human flesh, he sells his own son into bondage, his own daughter he sells to bondage and dishonour! True, there is some black blood in their veins to darken the instincts of paternity in him, still he denies not their parentage, and is right in thinking that he will not forfeit in England his character as a gentleman!

Nor does he traffic in human flesh alone; he traffics in human corruption, in the vices of his dependants, in those of his own sons. The more children are born on his estate the more dollars will go into his pocket. Whoever the father may be *they* follow the mother's lot, and go to increase the number of his human chattels. How slight a set-off against these profits are the corruptions tainting his very hearth; the jealousies and heart-burnings of the women of his own race, and the misery of the outcasts thus doomed from birth. Such things are not entered in his ledger.

Both then are traders, the men of the North and the men of the South alike, only the merchandise is different. And what is the influence on the

two regions of these different methods of trading. They afford some singular illustrations of the gentleman-like qualities that are so necessary to insure English sympathy. The trading spirit of the North has tended to spread the value of education; accordingly in no country is it so universal. The peculiar trade of the South makes education dangerous, and as a natural consequence of ignorance, creates idle apathy in some, and idle ruffianism in others. In spite of the supposed lowering tendencies of trade in the North a healthy state of morals is found to flourish, and a high respect for women is an honourable characteristic of the whole country. But the interest of his trade places the Southerner's home amid scenes of licentiousness which make an Eastern harem seem an abode of purity, and he is trained from boyhood to see — for the sake of gain — how far womanhood can be degraded; to see women treated like beasts of burden, and working like them under the lash even in that condition which elsewhere calls for the reverent tenderness in all but the most brutalised of men. That full measure of barbarism is probably to be found only when the presence of slavery has corrupted from early youth the very instincts of manhood; yet it is the men so corrupted who are now held up to our admiration. Some years ago the very draymen of London

insulted Marshal Haynau because he was accused of having ordered women to be flogged, and now the high-born and refined among us are so little shocked at such things that they hold as chivalrous the men with whom such orders are too frequent to deserve notice. The Yankee for the sake of trade explores the far wilderness and prepares new homes for an enterprising race, carrying freedom and industry with him as the surest means of making those homes blessed. The Southerner for his trade also craves new lands, and there he plants the curse that has blighted his own fair region ; there he prepares for future generations that hot-bed of corruption in which alone slavery can thrive, creating a moral pestilence which brutalises the bad and blunts the sensibilities of the best.

Such are a few of the most remarkable points that show the different influence exercised by the two methods of trade pursued in the North and the South ; among those whom we hear daily reviled, and those for whose chivalrous qualities our admiration is loudly claimed. The one great difference that exists between the two sections of the country and from which all other points of variance spring, is that which is kept as far as possible out of sight by the advocates of the South, and that is the existence of slavery. Try as we will to disguise the fact that is what we are really praising and

encouraging whenever this miserable sympathy with the slaveholder gets possession of us. Gain, and the extension of slavery to ensure the gain, are the watchwords of this rebellion, the most unprincipled, because the most groundless, the world ever saw. And to uphold the rebels is to give our sanction to the slavery which is their boast, and to a love of gain so intense and so pitiless that to achieve its purposes it tramples on the most sacred rights of humanity and shrinks not from dooming a whole race to every form of misery and degradation.

If these are the chivalrous gentlemen whom England is now taught to admire, we may soon be seeking a yet higher type at the Court of the King of Dahomey.

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
3 9999 06563 738 9

JUN 30 1903